

The Butte-Silver Bow Archives for Outstanding Local Preservation Project

The 2010 Montana Local Preservation Award goes to the Butte-Silver Bow Public Archives. Through this award we acknowledge the extraordinary efforts of a small group of individuals supported by their community to preserve Butte's exceptional history.

These efforts began with the creation of the Butte Public Archives in 1981 through the heroic actions of avocational historian, Bill Walker. Walker alerted the local government and Chief Executive, Don Peoples to the indiscriminate dumping of local government records. Walker convinced Peoples and his Commission of the need to preserve these records, which led to the local government re-appropriating the unused 1891 fire station on Quartz St. for archive storage.



In the next 20 years, collections grew to include records associated with local government, corporations, and unions, newspaper articles, historic photos, maps and family records. By the early 1990s, Butte-Silver Bow appointed Ellen Crain as archivist, marking a new era in expansion of collections and services. During Ellen's tenure numerous books and films have been created using the sources at the old fire hall on Quartz Street.

In 2007, Ellen and her assistants Lee Whitney and Harriet Schultz along with the Archives Board of Directors, and the Friends of the Archives campaigned to place a \$7.5 million bond on the November ballot. The citizens of Butte-Silver Bow have long held their history in high esteem, but never have they made their feelings more clear than they did that November with a 3 to 1 passing of the bond.

With funding in hand and the support of the public, Butte-Silver Bow hired A & E Architects of Missoula to design a historically sympathetic addition and building upgrades to the fire hall. The Butte-Silver Bow Public Archives Renovation and Technical Review Committee,



appointed by Chief Executive Paul Babb and the Council of Commissioners, oversaw the renovation and construction. Oswood Construction Company was hired and the Archives broke ground in 2009, and became open to the public by August 2010.

Tonight we recognize the effort and drive of numerous parties, and the financial support of Butte citizens in developing a vision for creating a 21st century archives. Located in the heart of the Butte Historic Landmark District, the Butte-Silver Bow Public Archives is a daily reminder of Butte's history and the community's dedication to its preservation and interpretation.

